Black and White

Sarah Wanlass

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Reviewer: Sarah Wanlass  
Reading Level: Young adult  
Rating: Dependable  
Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction; Adventure stories; Sports stories;  
Subject: African Americans--Juvenile fiction; Juvenile delinquency--Juvenile fiction; Basketball--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Black and White, through thick and thin—that's how it was supposed to be. Then Black got caught. Marcus and Eddie were buddies. They played basketball together and were a team on and off the court. Both were seniors at Long Island City High School. They had a lot going for them. Had. Times got tough and they didn't have money for senior dues and the class trip. It was Eddie's reckless suggestion to do a few hold-ups with his grandfather's gun to get the needed money. They didn't plan on the gun accidentally firing. Everything changed in an instant. Eddie was the one holding the gun; Marcus was the one who got caught.

*Black and White* is a story about race, family, friendship, honesty, and reality. It might not satisfy the reader's sense of justice, but it makes a meaningful statement about the court system and the need for honesty and integrity. Each chapter is written in first-person and alternates between Marcus's voice and Eddie's. It is a fast read. Volponi's writing is matter-of-fact and provides a smooth narrative, but nothing stunning. Swear words in the text may be offensive, but the overall cursing is kept to a minimum and is used in a way that is realistic for high school students. Though the morals and motives of some characters are disappointing, there is a certain sense of conscience which comes through in the first-person text. Even when the characters make lousy decisions, the reader can infer their sense of right and wrong.